

20  
19

CRICKET

EDITION

SPORTSMAN



FAF DU PLESSIS,  
SOUTH AFRICA

CARLOS BRATHWAITE,  
WEST INDIES

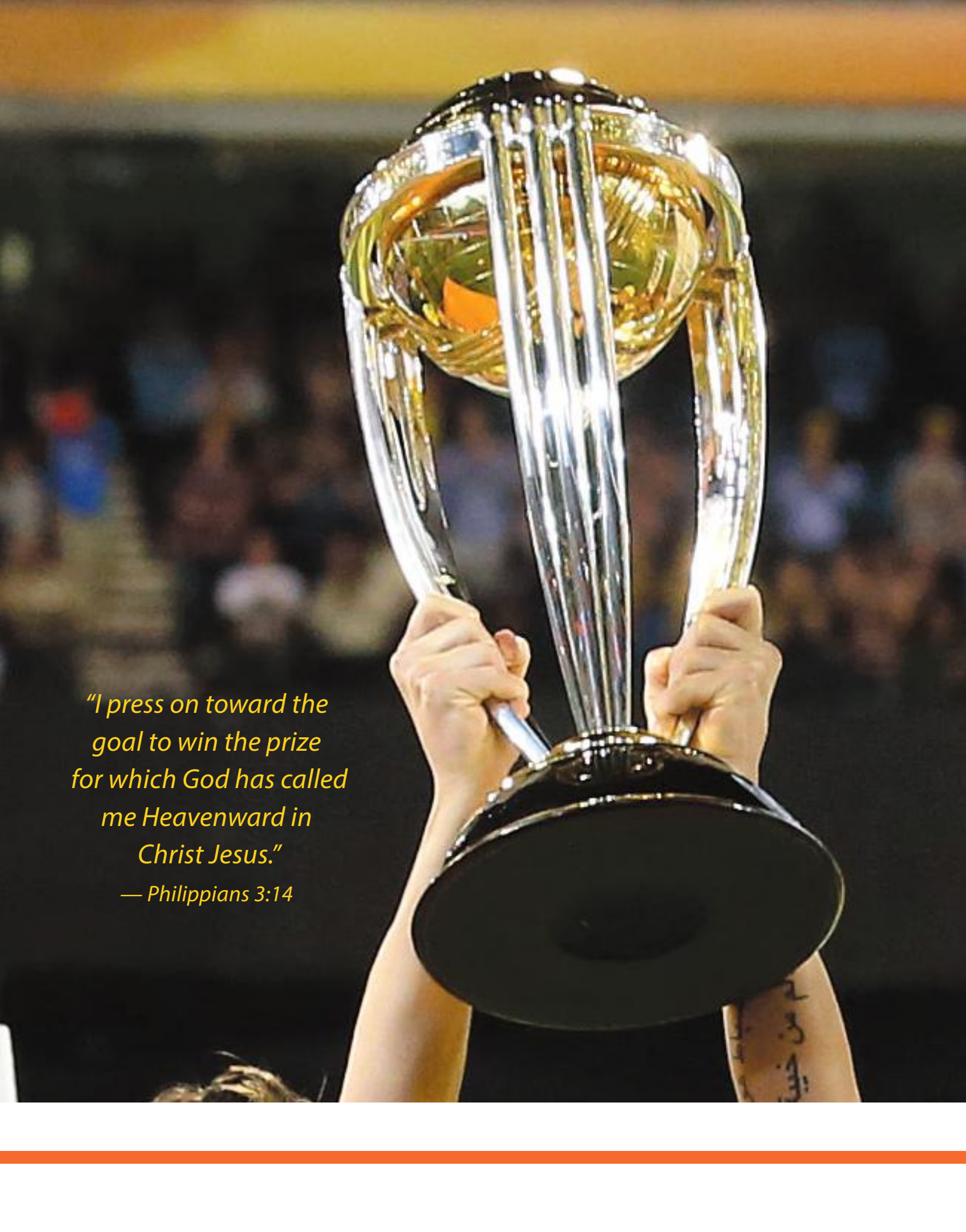


WORLD CUP

RECORDS | HISTORY | 2019 PREVIEW

ATHLETE TESTIMONIES  
FROM ACROSS THE WORLD



A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a large, ornate silver trophy. The trophy features a wide, dark base, a slender silver stem with vertical fluting, and a large, faceted glass cup at the top. The background is a blurred stadium filled with spectators, suggesting a sports event. The lighting is bright, highlighting the metallic sheen of the trophy.

*"I press on toward the  
goal to win the prize  
for which God has called  
me Heavenward in  
Christ Jesus."  
— Philippians 3:14*

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# CRICKET WORLD CUP



## TEAM

**417**

Most runs scored in a match: Australia  
(over Afghanistan in 2015)

**36**

Fewest runs scored in a match: Canada  
(against Sri Lanka in 2003)

**329-7**

Highest successful run chase: Ireland  
(against England in 2011)

**275**

Highest winning margin (runs): Australia  
over Afghanistan (2015)

**1**

Lowest winning margin (runs):  
Australia over India (1987, 1992)

**75.30**

Highest win percentage: Australia

**62**

Most wins: Australia

**42**

Most losses: Zimbabwe

**4**

Tied matches in World Cup history

**27**

Most consecutive wins: Australia  
(1999–2011)

**18**

Most consecutive defeats: Zimbabwe  
(1983–1992)

## BATTING

**2278**

Most all-time runs:  
Sachin Tendulkar, India

**673**

Most runs in one tournament: Sachin  
Tendulkar, India (11 innings in 2003)

**237**

Most runs in one match: Martin Guptill of  
New Zealand against West Indies (2015)

**6**

Most all-time centuries:  
Sachin Tendulkar, India

**4**

Most centuries in one tournament: Kumar  
Sangakkara, Sri Lanka (2015)

**37**

Most all-time sixes: Chris Gayle, West Indies;  
AB de Villiers, South Africa

**26**

Most sixes in one tournament: Chris Gayle,  
West Indies (6 innings in 2015)

# RECORDS

## BOWLING

**71**

Most wickets: Glenn McGrath, Australia

**4**

Most wickets in consecutive balls:  
Lasith Malinga of Sri Lanka against  
South Africa (2007)

**26**

Most wickets in one tournament: Glenn  
McGrath, Australia (11 matches 2007)

## FIELDING

**54**

Most dismissals (wicketkeeper):  
Kumar Sangakkara, Sri Lanka

**28**

Most catches (fielder):  
Ricky Ponting, Australia

## MOST APPEARANCES

### 6 TOURNAMENTS

Javed Miandad, Pakistan  
(1975, 1979, 1983, 1987, 1992, 1996)

Sachin Tendulkar, India  
(1992, 1996, 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011)

### 46 MATCHES

Ricky Ponting, Australia

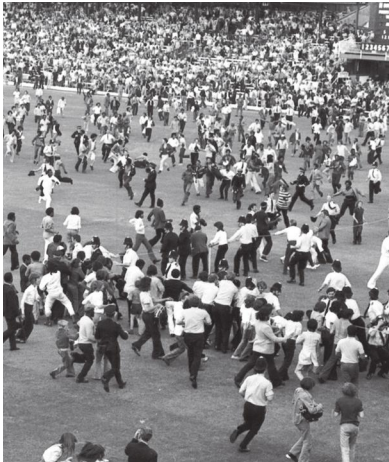


1975

1979

1983

1987



West Indies fans race to congratulate their team after beating the Australians in the final



West Indies batsman Viv Richards receives the Man of the Match award after defeating England.



India celebrates at Lord's after stunning the West Indies in the World Cup final.



Australian captain Allan Border raises the World Cup trophy after his team beat England

One Day International cricket was still new, and the debut Cricket World Cup was the first major limited overs ODI tournament to take place. The International Cricket Conference selected the six Test-playing teams at the time (Australia, England, India, New Zealand, Pakistan and the West Indies), plus leading Associate nations Sri Lanka and East Africa. England (the host), New Zealand, West Indies and Australia advanced to the semifinals, with the pre-tournament favorite, **West Indies**, defeating Australia in the final at Lord's by 17 runs. New Zealand's Glenn Turner led all run scorers with 333.

The second Cricket World Cup was much like the first — hosted by England, won by the favored **West Indies**. Seven of the eight teams remained the same (Canada replaced East Africa) and three of the four semifinalists made it back (Pakistan beat out Australia). The matches again featured 60 overs per team, players wore traditional white clothing, and red balls were used. The West Indies rode the bats of leading run scorers Gordon Greenidge (253) and Viv Richards (217) to a second straight World Cup title, defeating England in the final by 92 runs.

Back in England for the third time (with one match in Wales), the third edition of the Cricket World Cup finally saw a new winner. Seven of the nations made their third appearance (Zimbabwe made its debut), while the West Indies, England and Pakistan advanced to back-to-back semifinals. They were surprisingly joined by India, which failed to win a match in 1979. But India defeated England in the semis, then met the two-time reigning champions in the final. Batting first, **India** compiled 183 runs, then held the mighty West Indies to only 140, marking one of cricket's most shocking upsets.

The Cricket World Cup finally moved away from its English home in 1987, taking the tournament to India (17 matches) and Pakistan (10 matches). The eight teams participating remained the same from four years prior, and the tournament format remained the same, except that each match featured 50 overs instead of 60. The West Indies' dominance came to an end, as they failed to reach the semis. While the host nations were among the final four, England and **Australia** met for the final. Australia prevailed in the tightest (seven runs, 253 to 246) and highest-attended (95,000 people) final ever.



# HISTORY

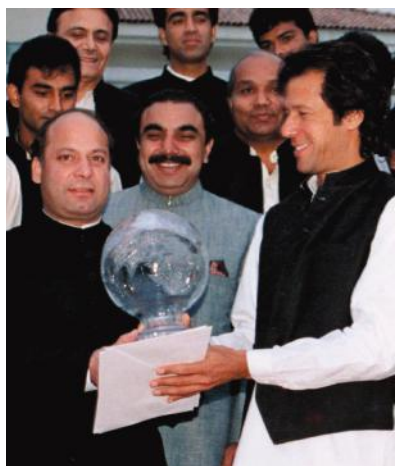
CRICKET  
WORLD  
CUP

1992

1996

1999

2003



*Pakistan's Imran Khan hands the World Cup trophy to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif celebrating their World Cup victory.*

The 1992 Cricket World Cup was the first to be played in the Southern Hemisphere, as Australia and New Zealand played hosts. It was also the first to feature South Africa, which had rejoined the ICC in 1991 after the end of apartheid. The final, played at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, featured England (making its third finals appearance in the past four tournaments) and Pakistan (its first finals appearance after three straight semifinal finishes). Led by future Cricket Hall of Famer Imran Khan, **Pakistan** took down England by 22 runs in front of 87,182 fans.



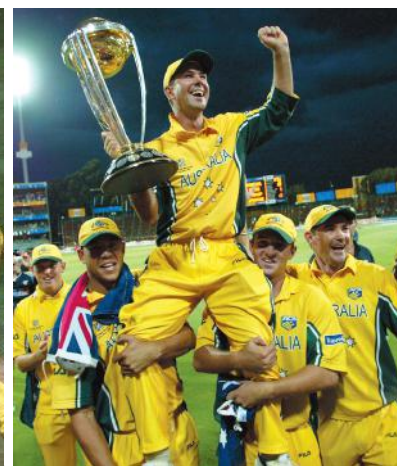
*Sri Lanka's Aravinda De Silva is escorted from the field by Indian commandos after the semifinal match.*

Pakistan and India played hosts a second time, but the 1996 World Cup also held matches in Sri Lanka, causing much controversy. Australia and the West Indies refused to play any matches in Sri Lanka following a January 1996 bank bombing in the country by a Sri Lankan terrorist group. Thus, Sri Lanka was awarded wins for both those games by forfeit. In its semifinal against India in Calcutta, Sri Lanka prevailed after Indian fans began to throw objects onto the field to show displeasure in how poorly their team was playing. **Sri Lanka** then upset mighty Australia in the final.



*Australia's Shane Warne celebrates against Pakistan in the 1999 World Cup final.*

The tournament returned home to England in 1999, and for the second consecutive time hosted 12 teams. For the first time, it featured the Super Sixes, a stage of play after the group stage and before the semifinals. One of the Cricket World Cup's most famous matches took place this year in the semifinals, when Australia and South Africa incredibly tied. The Aussies advanced to final on a tiebreaker, and ended up needing only 20.1 overs to win the championship by defeating Pakistan. It marked **Australia's** second World Cup title, and the first of what would become three straight championships.



*Australian captain Ricky Ponting is carried on the shoulders of his teammates in 2003.*

The Cricket World Cup moved to Africa for its first tournament in the new century, as the event was cohosted by South Africa, Zimbabwe and Kenya. And it featured 14 teams, the tournament's largest number ever at the time. Following a slew of upsets (South Africa, Pakistan, West Indies and England all failed to advance from the group stage), Australia won the championship with a dominant performance. It won all 11 of its matches, and took down India in the final with 359 runs, an all-time World Cup final record. Australia became the first nation to win three World Cups.

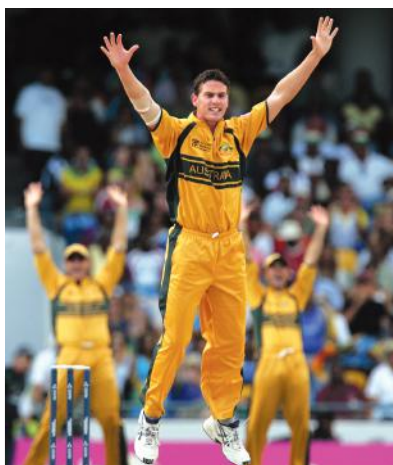


2007

2011

2015

2019



*Australia's Shaun Tait celebrates against Sri Lanka in the 2007 World Cup final.*



*India's players celebrate their win after defeating Sri Lanka.*



*The Australian team celebrates its victory over New Zealand.*



*Eoin Morgan will lead England as host of the 2019 World Cup.*

With a record 16 teams in 2007, the Cricket World Cup visited the Caribbean for the first time, as eight different islands/countries hosted matches. The squads were placed into four groups of four, from which eight teams advanced to the Super 8, a round-robin stage from which four nations advanced to the semifinals. Australia continued its dominance, running its World Cup unbeaten streak to 29 consecutive matches (dating back to May 1999).

**Australia** faced Sri Lanka in a rematch of the 1996 final, but the Aussies prevailed this time, collecting their fourth World Cup title and third straight.

The tournament returned to India and Sri Lanka in 2011, and played the first Cricket World Cup matches in Bangladesh. The field moved back down to 14 teams, and the top four nations from each group moved on to the single-elimination quarterfinals. India became the first nation to win the World Cup on home soil, as it defeated Sri Lanka by six wickets in the final. This matchup was the first time that two Asian teams met in the World Cup final. Overall, it's estimated that this World Cup edition was the mostwatched ever with 2.2 billion worldwide viewers.

Australia and New Zealand welcomed 14 nations for another highly-watched Cricket World Cup in 2015, and the co-hosts also met in the final. Tickets for the pool match between India, the defending champions, and Pakistan reportedly sold out within 12 minutes, and that match was estimated to have been seen by more than 1 billion viewers. The whole tournament was estimated to have been watched by more than 1.5 billion people. More than 93,000 fans attended the final, in which Australia defeated New Zealand by seven wickets for its fifth World Cup championship.

Twenty years since last being played at the game's home, the Cricket World Cup returns to England (and Wales) for a fifth time in 2019. Ten teams will compete in a single round-robin format, and then the top four advance to the semifinals. Cricket's Test-playing nations increased to 12 with the addition of Ireland and Afghanistan in 2017, but this will mark the first Cricket World Cup without all of the Test-playing nations (no Ireland or Zimbabwe) or any Associate members. The tournament begins with England vs. South Africa at The Oval, and concludes with the final at Lord's.





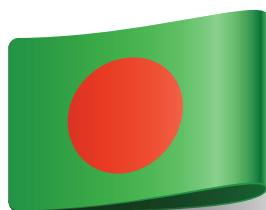
## AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan made its Cricket World Cup debut in 2015. After losing to Bangladesh by 105 runs and to Sri Lanka by four wickets, Afghanistan defeated Scotland by one wicket. In 2019, Afghanistan will open the tournament against defending-champion Australia, which defeated Afghanistan by 275 runs in the 2015 World Cup. The current Afghanistan squad is captained by Asghar Afghan (formerly Asghar Stanikzai).



## AUSTRALIA

The defending champion and most decorated nation in Cricket World Cup history, Australia enters 2019 seeking its sixth title. It has won the tournament a record five times (1987, 1999, 2003, 2007, 2015), has appeared in a record seven World Cup finals (in addition to the five titles it finished as runner-up in 1975 and 1996), was the first country to win three straight World Cups (1999, 2003, 2007), and was the first nation to appear in four consecutive World Cup finals (1996, 1999, 2003, 2007). Aaron Finch serves as captain for the current squad.



## BANGLADESH

This will mark Bangladesh's sixth appearance in the Cricket World Cup. It debuted in 1999, securing victories over Scotland and Pakistan, and has qualified for every tournament since. It failed to win a match in 2003, but the nation's best performance came in 2015, when it defeated Afghanistan, Scotland and England to advance to the quarterfinals. There, it lost to India by 109 runs. The current squad is captained by Mashrafe Mortaza, and Bangladesh will open the 2019 tournament against South Africa.



## ENGLAND

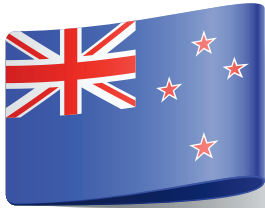
One of the most successful ODI cricket nations — and the birthplace of the game — England has never won the Cricket World Cup. It finished runner-up in three of the first five editions (1975-1992), but has failed to reach the semifinals since. The 2019 tournament is the fifth time England will play host (Wales also hosted some matches in 1999, and will again in 2019). If the English win, it would be the third straight World Cup in which one of the co-hosts capture the title. Captained by Eoin Morgan, England will open the tournament against South Africa.



## INDIA

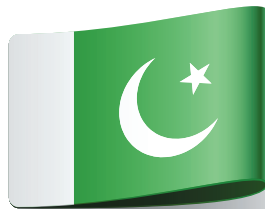
India won only one match in the first two Cricket World Cups, but has since become one of the strongest nations. It won the championship in 1983 — defeating the two-time reigning champions, West Indies — and took its second title in 2011 (defeating Sri Lanka), becoming the first host team to win the World Cup. India joined the West Indies and Australia as the only nations to claim the Cup multiple times, and only Australia has won more titles (five). India is captained by Virat Kohli, the 2017 ICC World Cricketer of the Year (and also the ODI player of the year).





## NEW ZEALAND

Though New Zealand has participated in every Cricket World Cup, has advanced to the semifinals seven times, and ranks No. 2 in all-time World Cup matches won, the team didn't make its first appearance in the final until 2015. The Black Caps were defeated by Australia, their fellow co-hosts, but the match was played in front of a record crowd (93,013). New Zealand, captained by Kane Williamson, will get a chance to avenge that loss when it faces Australia in its second-to-last round-robin match of the 2019 World Cup. The Black Caps' final round-robin match is against England.



## PAKISTAN

Just five years after becoming a nation in 1947, Pakistan earned full member status with the ICC. It has appeared in all 11 World Cups and won its first and only title in 1992 (defeating England), following three consecutive World Cups in which it couldn't advance out of the semifinals. Pakistan made it back to the final in 1999, but fell to Australia, which needed just 20 overs to claim the Cup. Captained by Sarfraz Ahmed, Pakistan will open the 2019 World Cup against the West Indies.



## SOUTH AFRICA

With the end of apartheid, South Africa was allowed to rejoin the ICC in 1991 (it was one of the three original members with England and Australia in 1909), and thus make its Cricket World Cup debut in 1992. The Proteas advanced to the semifinals, but were ousted by England. They have been among the final four three times since (1999, 2007, 2015), but have yet to reach the final. Captained by Faf du Plessis (page 10), South Africa will open the 2019 tournament against England in the event's first match, and close round-robin play against Australia.



## SRI LANKA

One of seven nations to appear in all 11 Cricket World Cups, Sri Lanka won the 1996 tournament, defeating mighty Australia in the championship match. The Sri Lankans had never advanced out of the group stage in their five previous appearances. They returned to the World Cup final in 2007 and 2011, but finished as runner-up both times. The squad is now led by captain Lasith Malinga, and Sri Lanka will open its 2019 campaign against New Zealand.



## WEST INDIES

The West Indies — made up of 15 Caribbean territories — were really the first powerhouse in Cricket World Cup history. They didn't lose a single match in the first two editions of the tournament, defeating Australia and England in the finals. Windies advanced back to the World Cup final in 1983, but were upset by India. They reached the semifinals again in 1996, but were prevented by Australia from reaching another final. The West Indies are now captained by Jason Holder, and will open the 2019 tournament against Pakistan.



# PREVIEW

CRICKET  
WORLD  
CUP '19

DATE:	MATCH:	VENUE:	DATE:	MATCH:	VENUE:
30 May	<b>England vs South Africa</b>	The Oval, London	18 June	<b>England vs Afghanistan</b>	Old Trafford, Manchester
31 May	<b>Pakistan vs West Indies</b>	Trent Bridge, Nottingham	19 June	<b>New Zealand vs South Africa</b>	Edgbaston, Birmingham
1 June	<b>New Zealand vs Sri Lanka</b>	Sophia Gardens, Cardiff	20 June	<b>Australia vs Bangladesh</b>	Trent Bridge, Nottingham
1 June	<b>Australia vs Afghanistan</b>	County Ground, Bristol	21 June	<b>England vs Sri Lanka</b>	Headingley, Leeds
2 June	<b>Bangladesh vs South Africa</b>	The Oval, London	22 June	<b>India vs Afghanistan</b>	Rose Bowl, Southampton
3 June	<b>England vs Pakistan</b>	Trent Bridge, Nottingham	22 June	<b>New Zealand vs West Indies</b>	Old Trafford, Manchester
4 June	<b>Afghanistan vs Sri Lanka</b>	Sophia Gardens, Cardiff	23 June	<b>Pakistan vs South Africa</b>	Lord's, London
5 June	<b>India vs South Africa</b>	Rose Bowl, Southampton	24 June	<b>Afghanistan vs Bangladesh</b>	Rose Bowl, Southampton
5 June	<b>Bangladesh vs New Zealand</b>	The Oval, London	25 June	<b>England vs Australia</b>	Lord's, London
6 June	<b>Australia vs West Indies</b>	Trent Bridge, Nottingham	26 June	<b>Pakistan vs New Zealand</b>	Edgbaston, Birmingham
7 June	<b>Pakistan vs Sri Lanka</b>	County Ground, Bristol	27 June	<b>India vs West Indies</b>	Old Trafford, Manchester
8 June	<b>England vs Bangladesh</b>	Sophia Gardens, Cardiff	28 June	<b>Sri Lanka vs South Africa</b>	Riverside Ground, Chester-le-Street
8 June	<b>Afghanistan vs New Zealand</b>	County Ground, Taunton	29 June	<b>Pakistan vs Afghanistan</b>	Headingley, Leeds
9 June	<b>Australia vs India</b>	The Oval, London	29 June	<b>Australia vs New Zealand</b>	Lord's, London
10 June	<b>South Africa vs West Indies</b>	Rose Bowl, Southampton	30 June	<b>England vs India</b>	Edgbaston, Birmingham
11 June	<b>Bangladesh vs Sri Lanka</b>	County Ground, Bristol	1 July	<b>Sri Lanka vs West Indies</b>	Riverside Ground, Chester-le-Street
12 June	<b>Pakistan vs Australia</b>	County Ground, Taunton	2 July	<b>Bangladesh vs India</b>	Edgbaston, Birmingham
13 June	<b>India vs New Zealand</b>	Trent Bridge, Nottingham	3 July	<b>England vs New Zealand</b>	Riverside Ground, Chester-le-Street
14 June	<b>England vs West Indies</b>	Rose Bowl, Southampton	4 July	<b>Afghanistan vs West Indies</b>	Headingley, Leeds
15 June	<b>Australia vs Sri Lanka</b>	The Oval, London	5 July	<b>Pakistan vs Bangladesh</b>	Lord's, London
15 June	<b>Afghanistan vs South Africa</b>	Sophia Gardens, Cardiff	6 July	<b>India vs Sri Lanka</b>	Headingley, Leeds
16 June	<b>India vs Pakistan</b>	Old Trafford, Manchester	6 July	<b>Australia vs South Africa</b>	Old Trafford, Manchester
17 June	<b>Bangladesh vs West Indies</b>	County Ground, Taunton			

## SEMIFINALS

DATE:	MATCH:	VENUE:
9 July	Group Winners vs 4th Place	Old Trafford, Manchester
11 July	Group Runners-up vs 3rd Place	Edgbaston, Birmingham

## THE FINAL MATCH

DATE:	MATCH:	VENUE:
14 July	ICC World Cup 2019 Final Match	The Lord's, London



# COMPLETENESS IN CHRIST

FAF DU PLESSIS



Faf du Plessis,  
South Africa

*At 34 years of age, **Faf du Plessis** is one of South Africa's most consistent right-handed batsmen, and has proved himself a leader in the sport of cricket as the current captain of the national team. Having made his Test debut in November 2012, he soon became the fourth South African to score a Test century in his first appearance.*

*With a highly successful career spanning seven years and multiple nations, du Plessis has not forgotten where he places his trust and significance.*

I grew up playing most sports in school, but cricket was always my No. 1. As I began to play internationally, I quickly learned that, like with any sport at this level, you are guaranteed to have highs and lows. Now that I'm more experienced in my career, I have learned to be a lot more consistent in both the highs and the lows, not only in cricket, but in life. I treat my personal successes the same as my failures — as opportunities to grow and learn.

I grew up thinking of myself as a Christian, but it was more of a religion to me. I didn't have a relationship with Jesus, so nothing ever took root in my heart. It was only when I began on a journey with a pastor — now a friend of mine — who explained to me what Jesus' love really looks like. Once I understood this powerful truth, I chose to get baptized. My heart instantly changed as I gave my life to Christ and started



understanding the truths of God much more clearly. As I found a new completeness in Christ — something I had never experienced before — I wanted to change the way I lived my life to be in alignment with these truths.

Initially, it was hard to grasp the concept of giving your career and performance over to God, trusting Him in whatever happens on the cricket field, whether that results in success or failure. But now, as I have grown in my faith and knowledge of God's sovereignty, I truly believe that He has put me here for a reason. I have a purpose in Him.

There are a few challenges I face as a Christ-follower in this sport. The first one is the environment I find myself in. There are many cricket players who come from different beliefs and faiths, and in many teams, I have been the only Christ-follower. That can be quite lonely in the sense that I don't have people there for support

or just to pray with. The second struggle is the temptations we face. Because we travel a lot all around the world, there arises many situations where you face group pressure to do something you shouldn't. But as I grow stronger and more mature in my faith, the easier it is to say no.

I know the reason I have success in this sport is solely due to Jesus and I thank Him every day for that. When my career is done, I want to be remembered as a very good leader who challenged other players to be the best they can be. I also want to be known as someone who stood up for what they believed in.

Lastly, I want to have a positive influence on our country. I know that my purpose is about more than the runs I score on the cricket field. I hope to be able to spend time with people to show them the love of Jesus and see His love shine through them as well. 🙏

*Faf's favorite verse:*

***“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”***

***— Philippians 4:6***



AP Photo/Manish Swarup



# SHINING LIGHT

CARLOS BRATHWAITE



Carlos Brathwaite,  
West Indies

**Carlos Brathwaite** is a West Indies all-rounder cricketer from Barbados who took over as captain of the West Indies Twenty20 Internationals (T20I) team in 2016. He competes in Test cricket, One Day Internationals (ODIs) and Twenty20 Internationals for the West Indies. In the last over of the 2016 World T20 final against England, Brathwaite became the first West Indies player to hit four consecutive sixes in a T20I match.

I always wanted to be a pro cricketer, but I also wanted to be an entrepreneur. I think I was 19 when I came to a crossroads — should I carry on with university and pick up cricket later, or should I devote a few years to the game? I decided I would see how playing went, knowing I could get a degree at a later stage if necessary. So that was very important, and thankfully my career has turned out well.

The World T20 final changed my life. I don't even know how to explain how I actually hit those sixes, but it was an amazing feeling. It was just one of those fairy tales that you actually get to live out; it was a dream come true to win a World Cup and what a way to win it! To be part of an epic final and then hitting four sixes in the way that I did, it was something I had never dreamed about. I was speechless.



I was brought up in a home that loved Christ; my mum is a very devout Christ-follower and I always went to Sunday school. It was all around me; going to church and Sunday school would always be very much a part of the day. So from a young age I was introduced to Christ and I grew with it for myself. I fell off the wagon at times but it is ingrained in me and my faith is part of my foundation.

I see my ability as a gift from God. My dad tells the story of me being 2 or 3 years old and playing drives in the backyard. I work very hard and I think sometimes people take gifts from God and expect that you don't have to do anything with them; they just mature and you get better. But there is a lot of hard work to be done.

It's like the man in the Bible who was given talents and doubled them, compared with the

man who got his talent and buried it. So while this is a gift from God and I appreciate it, there is also still a lot of hard work to be done to eventually mature it and reap success.

God is teaching me humility right now. I have been so fortunate to share an Indian Premier League dressing room with Imran Tahir, J.P. Duminy and Rahul Dravid — guys who are so humble. They have achieved so much in cricket and when fans come up to them in cricket-mad India, hounding them for pictures, they are so polite in saying yes or no.

For me, to get the same praise that they are showered with is hard to accept. It's now time for me to bring that humility back to the Caribbean and be a shining light to my peers, and show it wherever I go. 🏏

*Carlos' favorite verse:*

***"Jesus wept."***

***— John 11:35***

***I think men feel they need to be strong and macho, but if Jesus can cry, why can't I? This verse allows me to connect with my emotions.***

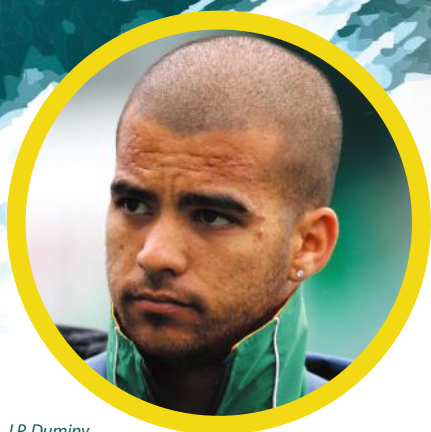


Photo by MICHAEL BRADLEY/AFP/Getty



# NOTHING WITHOUT CHRIST

J.P. DUMINY



J.P. Duminy,  
South Africa

*South African cricketer J.P. Duminy has made quite a name for himself as a left-handed batsman and right-handed off-spin bowler. Having grown up in the Western Cape of South Africa, he currently plays for both his home team, the Cape Cobras, and the South African national team.*

It all started when I was a young boy of 8 years old, playing for the Strandfontein Cricket Club — I fell in love with the game of cricket. While I enjoyed the game immensely, it was my dad who believed I had the talent to represent my country one day. At the age of 17, I received my first professional contract with the Western Province.

I have always been incredibly blessed to have such amazing family, friends and coaches as my support structures. But it was in 2012, when I snapped my Achilles, that I truly grew in my reliance on and personal faith in Christ Jesus. This crucial time in my life was even more significant for my spiritual walk. He put some

really good friends around me who guided me through my journey of getting to know who Christ really is and understanding what He did for me on the cross at Calvary.

*"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." — Galatians 2:20*

Since that time, my drive is to be the best I can be in my sport in order to honor God with the talent He's given me. I want to glorify Him and His name through every little thing I do.

There are huge expectations that come with being a professional athlete, and because of those expectations we can become desperate at times. This career might look easy, but with the

amount of time and energy we as professional cricketers invest in our sport, we face certain challenges every day. Throughout the years, I've learned that there is only so much I can do in my own strength. After that, it's all about leaving it in God's hands.

I am nothing without Christ. None of my successes would have been possible without Him. We are all fallen creatures and that's why Christ died for us. My identity is not found in how anyone else labels me, it's found in who He says I am.

At the end of my life, I want to be remembered as someone who, like Christ, gave his all at all times, who loved people, who was compassionate to the needs of others, and who always had a servant attitude. 🙏

*J.P.'s favorite verse:*

***"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose."***

***— Romans 8:28***



AP Photo/Ross Setford



# KNOWING THE ONE WHO GIVES LIFE

TINU YOHANNAN



*Tinu Yohannan,  
India*

*Tinu Yohannan, a former Indian bowler, returned to the cricket field as the bowling coach for the Kerala state team from 2014-2018. He is now in charge of the academy structure and coaching system in Kerala.*

I came from an athletic family. My dad, T.C. Yohannan, was the first Asian to jump 8 meters in the long jump. Seeing him do so well in athletics, it became my own ambition to reach athletic success. I trained hard, and after doing so, was able to represent my state in a few events in the high jump during my school years. Then during my final years of school, I developed an affinity for the game of cricket. When I started playing this game, I realized I had a talent for bowling fast. I decided

to give it a try and soon understood that I might be able to make it big in this game.

By God's grace, I was given the opportunity to train with one of the world's top bowling coaches, Dennis Lillee, a former bowler from Australia. For five years under his teaching, I learned everything there was to know about the sport. In 2001, I was given the opportunity to represent my country, India, on the national

team. This was a dream come true — not only for me, but for my state of Kerala, on the southern tip of India. No one from Kerala had ever made the national team before! It was a big achievement to represent my state and my country in this sport.

In my debut match in December 2001, during my first over, I got a wicket with the fourth ball I bowled. I was immediately successful on the new pitch. At the age of 21 years old, I felt like I had made it. No one could destroy me! And no one could take this sport away from me. I lived for this moment. I even had the chance to play on the same team with my idol, Sachin Tendulkar.

I traveled and played on the national team for another two years, until in 2003 when I suffered some injuries. Initially I thought I could make it back to the limelight; I thought I was invincible. But when the opportunity never came back to me, reality struck me that it's not that easy. For four years I worked extra hard in practice, but even after all this effort, I couldn't get back on the team.

Having been brought up in a home that followed Christ, I was used to prayer and Bible reading. I was a so-called "Christ-follower," reading the Bible every day and praying with my family. But it wasn't until I began to

lose my position on the cricket field when I suddenly realized my need to get closer to God. Something in me had made me believe that when I reached a certain goal, I would find peace and rest. When that didn't happen, I began to look to God. He began to bring various people in my life — people I didn't know until that point — who told me that God had a purpose and a plan for me. They told me I didn't have to worry, that He would take care of me.

I began to seek and understand God's Word more. Then in May of 2007, the real u-turn happened in my life. I suddenly understood not only who God is, but who Jesus Christ is. I used to pray to God and read my Bible, but before this moment I had never really grasped who Jesus was. I began to understand that Christ died for me, giving His life up for me so that I may have life in Him. He is God and He is living within me.

This revelation changed my life immediately! As I met with my pastor that day, I could feel my life turning around. It was at that point that I knew the God of Heaven is with me and He loves me. This indescribable realization gave me new life.

God spoke to me very clearly that day, letting me know that He is the One who gives life. Nothing else is worth losing our souls over. Everything I do is for God because He is the

One who gives me real life and peace through Jesus Christ. This revelation relieved me from all anxiety, fear and pressure. All the burdens I carried with me throughout my cricket career were immediately taken away.

From that day on, every time I entered the cricket field, I knew it wasn't me anymore; God was doing the work through me. The Bible says in Romans 6:4, "We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life." I'm not the old Tinu. I live in Jesus Christ and He in me. He is the One who leads me.

My favorite verse in the Bible is Psalm 32:8, which says, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with My loving eye on you." This truth has become a reality and a pillar in my life, giving me a lot of strength.

Whatever you might gain in this world — a name, fame, money — it's not worth comparing to life with Christ. Your soul is more precious than anything the world has to offer. There's only one way to save your soul and that is through Jesus Christ. He is the only way to the Father. The real joy I experience today is through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. 🙏

*Tinu's favorite verse:*

***"I will instruct  
you and teach  
you in the way  
you should go;  
I will counsel you  
with My loving  
eye on you."***

***— Psalm 32:8***





# PLAYING FOR AN AUDIENCE OF ONE

KATIE PERKINS



Katie Perkins,  
New Zealand

*After setting her mind as a youngster to compete for the New Zealand women's national cricket team, **Katie Perkins** found herself lost and far away from that goal in her early 20s. But when she handed the game over to God, her athletic career took a positive turn. She debuted for the New Zealand White Ferns in January 2012, and has appeared in more than 100 international matches since. Also a full-time police officer in New Zealand, the 30-year-old Perkins keeps her relationship with God at the forefront of all she does.*

To play cricket for New Zealand was the first dream I ever really had. Ever since I was 5 years old, this dream has given me a drive like nothing else. I had other passions, but cricket trumped them all.

I grew up going to church, with a strong Godly influence in my life because of my family. I was a good kid and followed the teachings I learned in Sunday school, but being a good kid and knowing God are two very different things. It wasn't until I was 15 years old, after being mentored by a good friend for a number of years,

when I started understanding the relational side of God. Then I remember one morning at church, I prayed to God and told Him I wanted to follow Him, to live my life for His glory. At that moment, the Holy Spirit filled me and the emotion and adrenaline that surged through my body was something quite indescribable.

But because I loved the game of cricket so much, my pursuit of a career in the game soon became my god. My self-worth was defined by my success or failure on the cricket field. My



mood was determined by how well I played that day.

After my toughest season in 2010-2011, my dream of playing for the White Ferns felt further away than ever before. I needed something to change. The offseason that followed turned my whole life around. I went to an "Ultimate Training Camp" in April 2011, which was centered around Christ. There I met other athletes who had a heart for God, all wanting to understand more about God in their sport environment. My eyes were opened to the fact that God didn't care about my results on the field. He cared about how I played the game. I learned about playing for God, an audience of One, and about my true worth, which can only be found in God.

As the winter progressed, my best friend challenged me about where God was in my cricket game. The truth was, He wasn't there at all. After a lot of prayer and struggling with the reality I may never be a White Fern, I tried to understand how to love myself for who I was, instead of what I could achieve. By the time the next season came

around, I had let go of my lifelong dream and given cricket over to God.

The freedom and joy I played with that season led to the most successful and consistent summer I'd ever had, and to the phone call that brought me to tears of joy as I found out I would be a White Fern!

I wish I could say I always play with this type of joy and freedom but I can't. I struggle constantly. As life and cricket got in the way, I let myself become distracted, and let cricket take priority in my life once again. At a Twenty20 World Cup semifinal, my love for cricket was non-existent. I was pretty low. I knew it was God that was missing in my life. I felt like my prayers were falling on deaf ears, but in reality, it was me who was choosing to be deaf toward God.

When I got back to New Zealand, I reached out for help. I connected with chaplains and a mental skills coach. I've been more disciplined about going to church and not allowing my sport to get in the way. I'm a work in progress, but I know I'm moving in

the right direction — closer and closer to God.

I don't always cope well when I lose. It's an ongoing battle. But I try to remind myself of God's truths: I am adequate, I am perfectly loved. Whenever I am lacking confidence in my ability to play, I remind myself of 2 Timothy 1:7, which says, "For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline."

A strong visual I have connected with this truth is that of a 100-meter runner standing at the starting block. Whatever happens between the gun going off and the end of the race will have an impact on the immediate future of that runner in this life. But God's love and sacrifice for that athlete does not change one bit at the end of the race from when they were waiting at the starting block.

I now aim to always have my faith play a significant role in my sport and in my life. And I really appreciate when I see it in other players too. 🙌

*Katie's favorite verse:*

***"For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self discipline."***

***— 2 Timothy 1:7***



Photos courtesy of Don Miles. For more photos visit [womenscricket.net](http://womenscricket.net)





**RUWAN KALPAGE**

# TRUSTING IN THE LIVING GOD



*Ruwan Kalpage,  
Sri Lanka*

***Ruwan Kalpage** is former Sri Lankan cricketer who played in the 1992 Cricket World Cup. He later spent time coaching at the national level for Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.*

The experience which I am about to relate occurred a few years ago. When I went to service my car, I met a person who worked in the same company I worked for few years prior. Although we had never met or talked, there became an appointed time in my life for this person to talk to me.

My life was centered on two things: cricket and religion. From the age of 9 I was very interested in cricket, as my father was a reputed cricketer.

My childhood dreams were fulfilled when I was selected to represent Sri Lanka in the Test team.

I was brought up in a religious background that demanded strict compliance of rituals and discipline. I followed religious observances and lived a life I thought was good and correct. But while playing cricket, I indulged in many vices that I thought were normal. I did not feel bad about these things.



My cricket career had many ups and downs. I played in the 1992 World Cup tournament but then was subsequently dropped from the team in 1996. I knew it was not going to be easy to make a comeback to the team in the future with the tough competition among players.

Suddenly this disappointment became an appointment for me. The person I met at the service station had too been like me. He began to talk about a God who was close to him; he said that we are created by this God who loves us. Further, I was told that God could rule over my life and change things for me.

At this point of time, my family life also was not in the best of shape. I had a lot misunderstandings and arguments with my wife. All of this, as well as career disappointments, were making me very frustrated. When I heard that there is a God who loves me, cares for me, and understands

what I'm going through, it surprised me. This person also told me that this God who created the universe had also sent His Son Jesus to live and die for me.

After hearing about this God and His Son, Jesus Christ, I knew my life was not on the right path. I decided to change my life and hand it over to God so He could lead and rule over me. I was going through a difficult patch in life, but when I opened my heart to God, it turned out to be the best ever in my life.

Life hasn't been the same since. I feel I have rediscovered it. God changed every aspect of my life. I was called back to the Sri Lankan team after two years, and once again, I represented Sri Lanka at the World Cup, the 1999 tournament in the U.K. Furthermore, my family life was also restored.

I now have satisfaction as I live with joy and peace with my wife, and I've been

blessed with a daughter and son. I do not feel frustrated when things become tough or go wrong. I know there is God who walks with me. I know it is Jesus who changed my life and gave me a new direction. If not for Jesus, my life would be a disaster.

I retired from cricket in 2000, and for the last 18 years I've been an international coach, traveling all over the world. Cricket does not control my life anymore. My trust is in the Lord Jesus who made all things new for me. I know He came to this world to give life abundantly.

Today, I urge you to turn your life to Jesus and experience the miracle of a new life — one full of joy, peace and contentment. Jesus says, "Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). Put your trust in the living God; He will never put you to shame. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. We can be victorious in Him. 🙏

Ruwan's favorite verse:

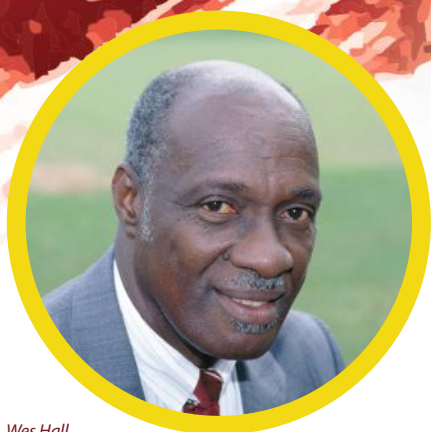
***"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight." — Proverbs 3:5-6***





# LIFE-CHANGING PERSONAL FAITH

WES HALL



Wes Hall,  
West Indies

**Wes Hall**, legendary fast bowler for the West Indies, grew up in the least luxurious of situations in Barbados. Now 81 years old, the ICC Cricket Hall of Famer reflects on his journey.

Our home was full of love but had not even one of the modern conveniences. My hope, as an 8-year-old, was that cricket would give me an outlet to experience a better quality of life. My goal was to one day play on the West Indies team.

My dad had a low-paying job and my mother worked more than one job to try to help provide. My mother was a remarkable woman of faith and values; I really looked up to her. When I was young,

I was religious but it wasn't until much later when I understood that I could accept Christ as my Savior and experience a significant spiritual relationship with God.

Later on, as a politician, I found myself responding harshly to a reporter on a television program. My mother saw this on television and reacted with a reprimand. "You didn't act like the kind of son I brought up," she said.



That kind of honest, loving talk from my mother has always been helpful and appreciated. Her influence and discipline helped shape who I am today. As a West Indies player, I wanted to respect our opponents as competitors and not as the enemy.

My international Test cricket career got off to a good start against India. I especially enjoyed two seasons playing in Australia in the Sheffield Shield for Queensland. My Test cricket hat trick against Pakistan was the first for a West Indies player. In a famous Test match, I bowled the final over in the tied Test against Australia, one of only two such ties in Test cricket history.

And in a Test at Lord's, the Wisden Cricketers' Almanac wrote, "Possessing a long hostile run-up to the wicket, with an equally long follow-through, Hall bowled as though he meant to take a wicket with every delivery. Nobody will ever

forget his famous last day in the Test at Lord's, when he bowled on and on, hour after hour."

But it wasn't until after my playing career that I turned to Christ as Lord, asking Him to forgive my sins and be my personal Savior. That's when my new life began.

I wasted some of the best years of my life not following Him. It has been wonderful in the years since to grow as a follower of Christ, to serve many cricketers and the West Indies team. One of the most special times was when Malcolm Marshall, another of our West Indies famous fast bowlers, in the last month of his life, entered into a conversation with me about his eternal life, and I had the joy of introducing Malcolm to his life-changing personal faith.

It is a joy to know the Lord personally and serve others. 🙏

Wes' favorite verse:

***"What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ."***

***— Philippians 3:8***

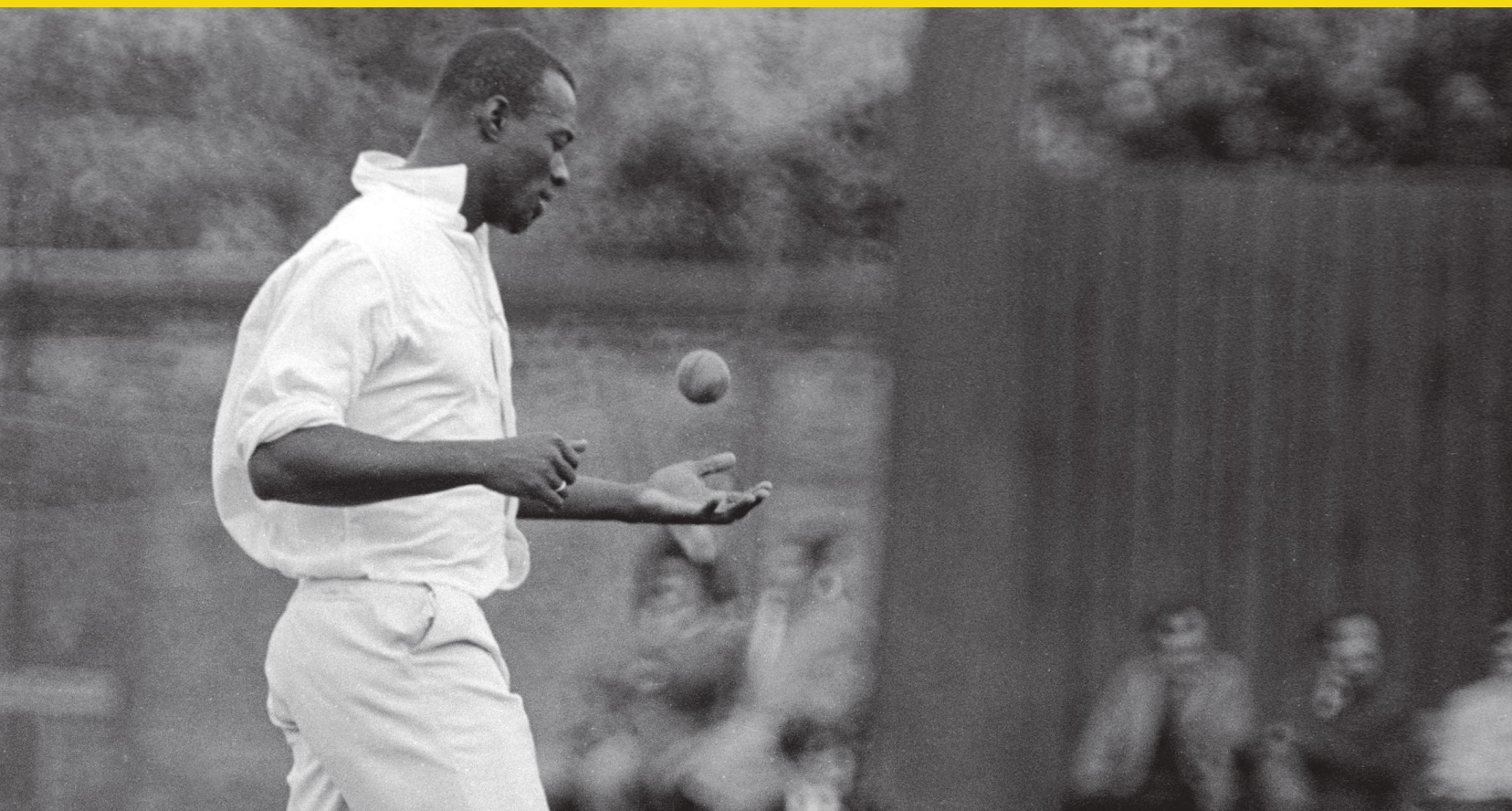


Photo by Patrick Eagar/Popperfoto/Getty



# You CAN know

## Our Problem, God's Solution

01 *"God created mankind in His own image ... God saw all that He had made, and it was very good" (Genesis 1:27, 31).*  
God made human beings with personal and relational qualities like His own (Genesis 1:26). But something went terribly wrong.

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02 *"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).*  
Our sins against a good and holy God have broken our relationship with Him (Isaiah 59:2).

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03 *"The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).*  
When humankind chose to rebel against God, sin poisoned the world. People lost their relationship with God, and with it their happiness. But God loved us so much He sent us Jesus, fully God and fully man, to deliver us from death and give us life (John 3:16).

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04 *"God demonstrates His own love toward us ... while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).*  
Jesus went to the cross to pay the price for our sins. He rose from the grave, conquering sin and death (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

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If you believe Jesus Christ loves you, and would like to ask Him to forgive you and receive salvation, pray this prayer with me.  
It's as simple as A-B-C: Admit, Believe, Confess.



# CHRIST PERSONALLY

05 *"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).*  
God's greatest gift is a restored relationship with Himself, delivering us from hell and granting us entry into Heaven (John 3:36). This gift depends not on our merit but solely on Christ's work of grace for us on the cross (Titus 3:5).

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06 *"If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9).*  
We must admit our wrongdoing, and ask God's forgiveness: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Then we are to affirm to others that the resurrected Jesus is our Lord.

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07 *"Whoever hears My Word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life" (John 5:24).*  
The life we long for is freely offered to us in Christ. We can believe His promise and call on Him to save us, humbly accepting His gift of eternal life: "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Romans 10:13).

*"Dear God, I ADMIT that I'm a sinner and the penalty of my sin is death. I BELIEVE that Jesus Christ is Lord, and that He died and rose from the dead for my sin. And I CONFESS Jesus as my Savior. Please forgive me. I repent of my sin and surrender my life to You. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen."*







# LORD'S CRICKET GROUND THE "HOME OF CRICKET"

Photo by Richard Heathcote/Getty

The northwest London venue is owned by the Marylebone Cricket Club, which took responsibility for the Laws of Cricket in 1788. However, the stadium (often referred to simply as Lord's) is on the third grounds established by founder Thomas Lord. The first, Lord's Old Ground, was built in 1787 but forced to move a mile northwest in 1811. Lord's Middle Ground lasted until 1813, when it needed to make room for a canal. The present Lord's location is about 230 meters northwest of the second site, and home to a 28,000-seat stadium.

Lord's hosted many of the matches for the first three Cricket World Cups, including all three of those finals (and again in 1999). It will feature five matches in the 2019 tournament, including the final.